United Nations S/2015/241

Security Council

Distr.: General
10 April 2015
English
Original: Arabic

Identical letters dated 6 April 2015 from the Chargé d'affaires a.i. of the Permanent Mission of the Syrian Arab Republic to the United Nations addressed to the Secretary-General and the President of the Security Council

On instructions from my Government, I should like to convey to you the following information:

I should like to draw your attention to the continuing efforts to alter the facts and mislead international public opinion regarding the crisis that has been going on in Syria for more than four years. Specifically, some have denied that the primary cause of the crisis in Syria is terrorism and the attacks committed by terrorist groups, at the exhortation of certain States, against innocent civilians who reside in peaceful cities, villages and neighbourhoods, and against their property. The terrorists have destroyed and plundered peaceful cities, villages and neighbourhoods, and killed and abducted their residents in order to terrorize and subjugate their peaceful civilian populations. This has led to the mass movement of persons seeking security and safety to areas under State control.

Bab Umar in the city of Homs, Raqqah city and its surrounding villages, Adra al-Ummaliyah, Ma'lulah in Rif Dimashq governorate, Shaykh Miskin in Dar'a governorate, Kasab in Ladhiqiyah governorate, the villages of Hasakah governorate and other places have witnessed those groups' barbarism and inhumanity. Those areas were known as being safe and stable, until they were attacked by mercenary and terrorist groups, such as Islamic State in Iraq and the Levant (ISIL), the Nusrah Front, the Free Army, the Army of Islam and the Levant Front, as well as other terrorist organizations affiliated with Al-Qaida. There are some who continue to refer to those terrorist groups as the "moderate armed opposition", despite the disgusting crimes against humanity they have committed.

For more than a year and a half after the start of the crisis, the city of Aleppo had managed to maintain its stability and security and preserve the safety of its citizens. In that period, there was no mass exodus from the city and no destruction. The situation in that city changed, however, when armed terrorist groups overran it at the behest of certain countries that claim they are the "friends of the Syrian people". Thanks to their friendship, the residents of Aleppo have been killed, starved, displaced and deprived of water, electricity, food and shelter, and the city's resources and property have been plundered and looted, as documented in the reports of the United Nations Secretariat.

In peaceful Hasakah governorate, the lives of its peaceful civilians were turned into a bloody nightmare when terrorists groups raided dozens of villages. The terrorists abducted and took captive civilians, including thousands of children and women, displaced more than 690 families and attacked houses of worship, including the historic church of Tall Harmaz, one of the oldest churches in the world, which they set on fire.

A few days ago, thousands of terrorists from the Nusrah Front, which, according to some, is a moderate group, attacked the peaceful cities of Busra al-Sham and Idlib, after they had hurled thousands of rockets at the residents of those peaceful cities over the course of several days. The terrorists stormed peaceful neighbourhoods and committed the most horrific crimes against civilians, forcing thousands of families to flee their peaceful neighbourhoods and head to areas under the control of the Syrian State and the national army. Those families fled in order to seek security and safety, and escape reprisal at the hands of the terrorists. In response to these humanitarian emergencies, the Syrian Arab Army has evacuated civilians, while Syrian ministries and Government institutions have assiduously sought to provide the displaced with shelter, food and various other forms of relief assistance. Preliminary reports indicate that, to date, the criminal attack against Idlib city has resulted in the displacement of approximately 30,000 persons, including 10,000 children. The terrorists also completely destroyed Idlib Hospital.

These terrorist crimes have intensified the forced movement of thousands of civilians to safe areas under State control, as they seek to escape the humanitarian situation in the areas from which they were displaced. That displacement has increased the burden on the Syrian State and its various institutions, as well as the responsibilities and burdens of United Nations and international humanitarian organizations. In that connection, it is absolutely certain that the States that support, finance and sponsor the armed terrorist groups and shed crocodile tears for Syrians are responsible for increasing that burden.

The Yarmouk Palestine refugee camp was recently beset by tragedy when ISIL, in cooperation with the Nusrah Front terrorist organization, entered the camp. This action attests to what we have warned against all these years, and reveals the truth about the alliance between Israel and those terrorist groups, the aim of which is to snuff out the just cause of the Palestinian people, as the Israeli Prime Minister stated in his election campaign.

Certain States and actors continue to support terrorism and persist in devising confusing precedents and terms, including the morally inexcusable expression "moderate armed opposition", in order to legalize violence, killing and interference in internal Syrian affairs. Their conduct, the goals and purposes of which are now clear, is unprecedented in the history of international relations and international law. Those who take on the role of the political opposition must be peaceful and abide by the law and regulations. Their struggle must be one of ideas and words, and they must build the State and its institutions. Anyone who bears arms must do so in accordance with the law and the regulations in force.

Contrary to the claims and accusations that are brought to the attention of United Nations organizations or, unfortunately, sometimes made by United Nations officials, all of the measures that the Syrian Government takes in response to these acts of terrorism stem from its awareness of its constitutional and legal responsibility to respond to the crimes being committed by terrorist groups that are

armed and funded by foreign actors. The picture is now clear and the falsehood of the claims and accusations that some parties make has been revealed. The sole aim of those parties is to destroy Syria by any means, including by distorting and inverting facts and employing terrorism to achieve their goal.

The Syrian Government affirms that it will continue to wage its war against terrorism. It is also determined to stem the dangers and horrors of terrorism, with a view to defending the citizens of Syria and their honour and in order to respond to the attack against the capacities of the country and its people. Syria once again calls on the Security Council to shoulder its responsibility to combat terrorism and address its root causes, and to halt the financing of terrorism. It also calls on the Council to renounce double standards in the fight against terrorism by implementing its resolutions on counter-terrorism, including resolutions 2170 (2014), 2178 (2014) and 2199 (2015). The Council should furthermore take stern measures against those States that support and finance terrorism. The regimes of those States, including Turkey, Qatar, Saudi Arabia and Jordan, are the terrorist organizations' partners in spilling the pure blood of the Syrian people. Laxity on the part of the Security Council in that regard will encourage the terrorist groups and the States that back them to continue their transgressions and further threaten peace and security in Syria and at the regional and international levels.

I should be grateful if the present letter could be circulated as a document of the Security Council.

(*Signed*) Haydar **Ali Ahmad**
Chargé d'affaires a.i.

United Nations S/2015/242

Security Council

Distr.: General
9 April 2015

Original: English

Letter dated 8 April 2015 from the Permanent Representative of Serbia to the United Nations addressed to the President of the Security Council

I am obliged to draw your attention to the statement made by Mr. Edi Rama, Prime Minister of the Republic of Albania, in a joint interview with Mr. Hashim Thaçi on Priština Television, on Monday, 6 April 2015. In the interview, Mr. Rama stated that "Albania and Kosovo will unite in a classical way" if the European Union does not open the way for the integration of Kosovo and visa liberalization.

The statement is provocative and exceedingly disruptive for relations in the region, in particular between Serbia and Albania, and represents a serious threat to regional peace and stability. In full disregard of Security Council resolution 1244 (1999) and tantamount to a call for redrawing international borders, the statement runs counter to the spirit of cooperation, mutual understanding and good-neighbourliness and the common future of the countries of the region and their efforts to join the European Union.

In drawing your attention to the statement, I would like to point out that the Republic of Serbia has consistently supported the above-mentioned values and principles, as enshrined in the Charter of the United Nations and set forth in European standards, and fully expects that they will be respected by other countries of the region as well. My country also expects that the international community will condemn the nationalistic rhetoric that hinders the process of reconciliation and progress in the region.

I should be grateful if the present letter could be circulated as a document of the Security Council.

(*Signed*) Milan **Milanović**
Ambassador
Permanent Representative

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United Nations S/2015/243

Security Council

Distr.: General
9 April 2015

Original: English

Letter dated 9 April 2015 from the Permanent Representative of Jordan to the United Nations addressed to the Secretary-General

I have the honour to forward to you a concept paper for the open debate of the Security Council on sexual violence in conflict, which will be held on 15 April 2015, under the Jordanian presidency of the Council (see annex).

I should be grateful if the present letter and its annex could be circulated as a document of the Security Council.

(*Signed*) Dina **Kawar**
Ambassador
Permanent Representative

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Annex to the letter dated 9 April 2015 from the Permanent Representative of Jordan to the United Nations addressed to the Secretary-General

Concept paper for the open debate of the Security Council on sexual violence in conflict

Throughout history, sexual violence has been widespread in armed conflict and continues to have devastating consequences for women, men, boys and girls and their families and communities. The year 2014 witnessed a spectacular rise in violent extremism throughout the globe, including in areas such as Iraq, the Syrian Arab Republic, Somalia, Nigeria, Mali, Libya and Yemen. In his 2015 report on conflict-related sexual violence (S/2015/203), the Secretary-General brings to light new dimensions of the issue, such as the use of sexual violence as a tactic of terror by extremist groups in a number of settings, in particular Iraq, the Syrian Arab Republic, Somalia and Nigeria. He articulates how sexual violence is integrally linked with the objectives, ideology and funding of extremist groups, noting that women's empowerment and sexual violence prevention should therefore be central to the international response.

The following five key themes run throughout the report and should form the substantive basis for the open debate:

(a) Sexual violence perpetrated by non-State actors accounts for the vast majority of incidents, although violations perpetrated by State actors, or armed groups associated with the State, also remain of grave concern. Accountability of all perpetrators is crucial as a key aspect of deterrence and prevention, and investigations and prosecutions must be centred on survivors and conducted in accordance with international standards;

(b) The issue of comprehensive services for survivors remains a weak link, especially in terms of the resources that the international community is dedicating. At the same time, it is important to think more broadly about including the issue of resources and livelihood support for survivors. Poverty reduction and development strategies therefore must have a window for survivors of sexual violence, who are among the most impoverished and economically marginalized;

(c) Over the past years, the issue of conflict-related sexual violence has been cemented as a peace and security issue relevant to the Security Council. Going forward, the Council must consider how to bring the full weight of the security sector behind the agenda. This will require articulating more precisely the role that security sector actors can play in the prevention of conflict-related sexual violence and securing their buy-in;

(d) At the global level, a strong legal framework and tools exist, but the main challenge will be to drive the agenda to the ground by engaging national authorities for their leadership and ownership and to encourage them to take specific measures. As they commit, expertise and resources will be required from the United Nations to support countries to implement their commitments;

(e) Even when Governments are engaged, it is important to recognize that the bulk of the violations are committed by non-State actors. Among the major

considerations are, therefore, the political and operational challenges relating to engagement with non-State actors for specific commitments and measures.

Focus of the open debate

Building on the report of the Secretary-General, the open debate will be held at 10 a.m. on 15 April in the Security Council Chamber and be public and open to all Member States. It will be chaired by Jordan. The participants will examine the emergence of violent extremist groups as perpetrators of sexual violence in conflict, the targeting of ethnic and religious minorities, among other minority groups, the vulnerability of women and girls during daily livelihood tasks such as farming and gathering water and firewood, the threat or use of sexual violence as a form of ill-treatment in detention settings, often against men and boys, the vulnerability of displaced persons and refugees and, in particular, the use of sexual violence to induce displacement, notably in the context of illicit exploitation of natural resources, and the severe lack of medical and other services, as well as reparations and livelihood support for survivors.

We encourage interventions that focus on the following dimensions:

(a) Sexual violence as a tactic of terror to serve key strategic imperatives of extremist groups;

(b) Promoting the participation of women in peace processes and ensuring that sexual violence is reflected explicitly in peace agreements and ceasefires;

(c) How the international community can best support national Governments to combat impunity and drive accountability, as an important aspect of deterrence and prevention;

(d) How the international community can best support strengthening the commitment and engagement of the security sector for prevention, specifically at the national level;

(e) Increased medical, psychosocial, legal and economic support and services for survivors of conflict-related sexual violence;

(f) Increased number of women peacekeepers;

(g) Accelerated deployment of women protection advisers and gender advisers in priority settings to ensure that Security Council resolutions are implemented on the ground;

(h) Implementation of early warning systems to identify escalating sexual violence in conflict;

(i) Fostering national ownership, including mobile courts and mixed tribunals or broader truth and reconciliation commissions, to provide justice to survivors of sexual violence and therefore contribute to peace and security;

(j) How best to support the efforts of the Office of the Special Representative of the Secretary-General on Sexual Violence in Conflict in this respect;

(k) How best to support the Team of Experts on the Rule of Law and Sexual Violence in Conflict, established pursuant to Security Council resolution 1888 (2009), which reports to the Special Representative of the Secretary-General.

Historical overview of the recognition of sexual violence as an international crime

For centuries, sexual violence in conflict was tacitly accepted as an unavoidable part of war. It was noted in a report on sexual violence and armed conflict in 1998 that, historically, armies considered rape one of the legitimate spoils of war. During the Second World War, all sides of the conflict were accused of mass rapes, yet neither of the two courts set up by the victorious allied countries to prosecute suspected war crimes — in Tokyo and Nuremberg — recognized the crime of sexual violence.

It was not until 1992, in the face of widespread rapes of women in the former Yugoslavia, that the issue came to the attention of the Security Council. For the first time ever, the statute of the International Tribunal for the Former Yugoslavia included rape as a crime against humanity, alongside other crimes such as torture and extermination, when committed in armed conflict and directed against a civilian population. In 2001, the Tribunal became the first international court to find an accused person guilty of rape as a crime against humanity. Furthermore, it expanded the definition of slavery as a crime against humanity to include sexual slavery. Previously, forced labour was the only type of slavery to be viewed as a crime against humanity.

The International Criminal Tribunal for Rwanda also declared rape to be a war crime and a crime against humanity. In 1998, the Tribunal became the first international court to find an accused person guilty of rape as a crime of genocide.

The Rome Statute of the International Criminal Court, in force since July 2002, includes rape, sexual slavery, enforced prostitution, forced pregnancy, enforced sterilization or "any other form of sexual violence of comparable gravity" as a crime against humanity when it is committed in a widespread or systematic way. Arrest warrants issued by the Court include several counts of rape as both a war crime and a crime against humanity.

Security Council resolutions relating to sexual violence

The Security Council has adopted seven resolutions to raise awareness of and trigger action against sexual violence in conflict:

(a) In resolution 1325 (2000), the Council called upon Member States to increase the participation of women in the prevention and resolution of conflicts and in the maintenance and promotion of peace and security. It called upon parties involved in armed conflict to abide by international laws that protected the rights of civilian women and girls and to incorporate policies and procedures that protected women from gender-based crimes such as rape and sexual assault;

(b) In resolution 1820 (2008), the Council called for an end to the use of acts of sexual violence against women and girls as a tactic of war and to impunity of perpetrators. It requested the Secretary-General and the United Nations to provide protection to women and girls in United Nations-led security endeavours, including refugee camps, and to invite the participation of women in all aspects of the peace process;

(c) In resolution 1888 (2009), the Council detailed measures to further protect women and children from sexual violence in conflict situations, such as requesting the Secretary-General to appoint a special representative to lead and

coordinate the Organization's work on the issue, to send a team of experts to situations of particular concern and to mandate peacekeepers to protect women and children;

(d) In resolution 1889 (2009), the Council reaffirmed resolution 1325 (2000), condemned continuing sexual violence against women in conflict situations and urged Member States and civil society to consider the need to protect and empower women and girls, including those associated with armed groups, in post-conflict programming;

(e) In resolution 1960 (2010), the Council asked the Secretary-General to list those parties credibly suspected of committing or being responsible for patterns of sexual violence in situations on its agenda. It also called for the establishment of monitoring, analysis and reporting arrangements specific to conflict-related sexual violence;

(f) In resolution 2106 (2013), the Council sought to strengthen the monitoring and prevention of sexual violence in conflict;

(g) In resolution 2122 (2013), the Council reiterated the importance of the involvement of women in conflict prevention, conflict resolution and peacebuilding.

United Nations A/69/865–S/2015/244

General Assembly
Security Council

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General Assembly
Sixty-ninth session
Agenda items 68 (c) and 107

Promotion and protection of human rights: human rights situations and reports of special rapporteurs and representatives

Measures to eliminate international terrorism

Security Council
Seventieth year

Identical letters dated 9 April 2015 from the Permanent Mission of Jordan to the United Nations addressed to the Secretary-General and the President of the Security Council

The Permanent Mission of Syria to the United Nations has continued to repeat its futile allegations against Jordan in a fruitless attempt to distract attention from its Government's actions against its own people. The Syrian Government has flouted its moral and legal obligation to protect civilians in Syria, ensure their safety and comply with the relevant Security Council resolutions and international humanitarian law.

Jordan will remain at the forefront of those States that have stood alongside the Syrian people during its acute humanitarian suffering. In accordance with the relevant Security Council resolutions, Jordan has facilitated the transit of humanitarian assistance across the Jordanian-Syrian border. It has hosted huge numbers of Syrian refugees who have fled the political and security situation caused in their country by the actions of the Syrian Government, which has seriously contravened human rights principles and international humanitarian law; committed systematic violations against its own people, in all its diverse components; facilitated the spread of terrorism and extremism; and besieged certain areas, denying access to humanitarian and medical assistance in an act of collective punishment against its own people.

Jordan will also continue to support efforts to find a political solution to the conflict in Syria that would end the bloodshed, realize a political transition consistent with the legitimate aspirations of the Syrian people, bring back security and stability to Syria and its people, restore national unity, bring together all components of Syrian society and create an environment that would allow the country's refugees to return to their homes.

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Jordan therefore calls on the international community and, in particular, the Security Council, to bring pressure to bear on the Syrian Government to end its violations against civilians in Syria and comply with the relevant Security Council resolutions, including resolutions 2139 (2014), 2165 (2014), 2191 (2014) and 2199 (2015); the resolutions of the General Assembly, including resolution 69/189; and international humanitarian law and human rights principles. Jordan emphasizes that failure to decisively address the question of the Syrian Government's compliance with those resolutions would effectively help to create a hotbed for the spread of terrorism in Syria, with repercussions for the security and stability of the region and the world as a whole.

I should be grateful if you would have the present letter circulated as a document of the General Assembly, under agenda items 68 (c) and 107, and of the Security Council.

(*Signed*) Dina **Kawar**
Permanent Representative

United Nations S/2015/245

Security Council

Distr.: General
14 April 2015

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France, Jordan, United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland and United States of America: draft resolution

Security Council,

Recalling its resolutions 2014 (2011), 2051 (2012), 2140 (2014), 2201 (2015), and 2204 (2015) and presidential statements of 15 February 2013, 29 August 2014, and 22 March 2015,

Noting the letter dated 24 March 2015 from the Permanent Representative of Yemen, to the United Nations, transmitting a letter from the President of Yemen, in which he informed the President of the Security Council that "he has requested from the Cooperation Council for the Arab States of the Gulf and the League of Arab States to immediately provide support, by all necessary means and measures, including military intervention, to protect Yemen and its people from the continuing aggression by the Houthis", and *noting* the letter dated 26 March 2015 from the Permanent Representative of the State of Qatar, S/2015/217, transmitting a letter from the Representatives of the Kingdom of Bahrain, the State of Kuwait, the State of Qatar, the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia and the United Arab Emirates,

Recalling the resolution of Summit XXVI of the League of Arab States on the developments in Yemen, stressing inter alia the necessity to resume Yemen's political transition process with the participation of all Yemeni parties in accordance with the Gulf Cooperation Council Initiative and its Implementation Mechanism and the outcomes of the comprehensive National Dialogue conference,

Reaffirming its strong commitment to the unity, sovereignty, independence and territorial integrity of Yemen, and its commitment to stand by the people of Yemen,

Condemning the growing number of and scale of the attacks by Al-Qaida in the Arabian Peninsula (AQAP),

Expressing concern at the ability of AQAP to benefit from the deterioration of the political and security situation in Yemen, mindful that any acts of terrorism are criminal and unjustifiable regardless of their motivation, whenever, wherever and by whomsoever committed,

Reiterating its support for the efforts of the Gulf Cooperation Council in assisting the political transition in Yemen and *commending* its engagement in this regard,

Reaffirming its support for the legitimacy of the President of Yemen, Abdo Rabbo Mansour Hadi, and *reiterating its call* to all parties and Member States to

refrain from taking any actions that undermine the unity, sovereignty, independence and territorial integrity of Yemen, and the legitimacy of the President of Yemen,

Expressing grave alarm at the significant and rapid deterioration of the humanitarian situation in Yemen, and *emphasizing* that the humanitarian situation will continue to deteriorate in the absence of a political solution,

Recalling that arbitrary denial of humanitarian access and depriving civilians of objects indispensable to their survival, including wilfully impeding relief supply and access, may constitute a violation of international humanitarian law,

Emphasizing the need for the return to the implementation of the Gulf Cooperation Council Initiative and its Implementation Mechanism and the outcomes of the comprehensive National Dialogue conference, including drafting a new constitution, electoral reform, the holding of a referendum on the draft constitution and timely general elections, to avoid further deterioration of the humanitarian and security situation in Yemen,

Reaffirming its full support for, and commitment to, the efforts of the United Nations and the Special Adviser of the Secretary-General on Yemen, in particular to the UN-brokered negotiations, and its support for the efforts of the Group of Ambassadors in Sana'a,

Alarmed at the military escalation by the Houthis in many parts of Yemen including in the Governorates of Ta'iz, Marib, AlJauf, Albayda, their advance towards Aden, and their seizure of arms, including missile systems, from Yemen's military and security institutions,

Condemning in the strongest terms the ongoing unilateral actions taken by the Houthis, and their failure to implement the demands in resolution 2201 (2015) to immediately and unconditionally withdraw their forces from government institutions, including in the capital Sana'a, normalize the security situation in the capital and other provinces, relinquish government and security institutions, and safely release all individuals under house arrest or arbitrarily detained, and *reiterating* its call on all non-State actors to withdraw from government institutions across Yemen and to refrain from any attempts to take over such institutions,

Deploring any attempt by the Houthis to take actions that are exclusively within the authority of the legitimate Government of Yemen, and *noting* that such actions are unacceptable,

Expressing alarm that such actions taken by the Houthis undermine the political transition process in Yemen, and jeopardize the security, stability, sovereignty and unity of Yemen,

Noting with concern the destabilizing actions taken by the former President of Yemen, Ali Abdullah Saleh, including supporting the Houthis' actions, which continue to undermine the peace, security and stability of Yemen,

Welcoming the intention of the Gulf Cooperation Council to convene a conference in Riyadh, upon the request of the President of Yemen, with the participation of all Yemeni parties to further support the political transition in Yemen, and to complement and support the UN-brokered negotiations,

Recalling its resolution 2117 (2013) and expressing grave concern at the threat to peace and security in Yemen arising from the illicit transfer, destabilising accumulation and misuse of small arms and light weapons,

Recognizing that the continuing deterioration of the security situation and escalation of violence in Yemen poses an increasing and serious threat to neighbouring States and *reaffirming its determination* that the situation in Yemen constitutes a threat to international peace and security,

Acting under Chapter VII of the Charter of the United Nations,

1. *Demands* that all Yemeni parties, in particular the Houthis, fully implement resolution 2201 (2015), *refrain* from further unilateral actions that could undermine the political transition in Yemen, and *further demands* that the Houthis immediately and unconditionally:

(a) end the use of violence;

(b) withdraw their forces from all areas they have seized, including the capital Sana'a;

(c) relinquish all additional arms seized from military and security institutions, including missile systems;

(d) cease all actions that are exclusively within the authority of the legitimate Government of Yemen;

(e) refrain from any provocation or threats to neighbouring States, including through acquiring surface-surface missiles, and stockpiling weapons in any bordering territory of a neighbouring State;

(f) safely release Major-General Mahmoud al-Subaihi, the Minister of Defence of Yemen, all political prisoners, and all individuals under house arrest or arbitrarily detained; and

(g) end the recruitment and use of children and release all children from their ranks;

2. *Requests* the Secretary-General to report on the implementation of this resolution and resolution 2201 (2015), in particular paragraph 1 of this resolution, in 10 days from the adoption of this resolution; and in case of further non-implementation, *expresses* its intent to consider designating additional individuals and entities who are engaged in or providing support for acts that threaten the peace, security or stability of Yemen, to be subject to the measures imposed by paragraphs 11 and 15 of resolution 2140 (2014);

3. *Decides* that the individuals listed in the annex of this resolution shall be subject to the measures imposed by paragraphs 11 and 15 of resolution 2140 (2014);

4. *Reiterates* the importance of the implementation of all measures imposed by resolution 2140 (2014), as extended in resolution 2204 (2015);

5. *Calls upon* all Yemeni parties, in particular the Houthis, to abide by the Gulf Cooperation Council Initiative and its Implementation Mechanism, the outcomes of the comprehensive National Dialogue conference, and the relevant Security Council resolutions and to resume and accelerate inclusive United Nations-brokered negotiations, including on issues relating to governance, to continue the

political transition in order to reach a consensus solution and *stresses* the importance of full implementation of agreements reached and commitments made towards that goal and *calls on* the parties, in this regard, to agree on the conditions leading to an expeditious cessation of violence, in accordance with the United Nations Charter and relevant Security Council resolutions, including this resolution and resolution 2201 (2015);

6. *Demands* that all Yemeni parties adhere to resolving their differences through dialogue and consultation, reject acts of violence to achieve political goals, and refrain from provocation and all unilateral actions to undermine the political transition and *stresses* that all parties should take concrete steps to agree and implement a consensus-based political solution to Yemen's crisis in accordance with the Gulf Cooperation Council Initiative and its Implementation Mechanism and the outcomes of the comprehensive National Dialogue conference;

7. *Urges* all Yemeni parties to respond positively to the request of the President of Yemen to attend a conference in Riyadh, under the auspices of the Gulf Cooperation Council, to further support the political transition in Yemen, and to complement and support the UN-brokered negotiations;

8. *Calls on* all parties to comply with their obligations under international law, including applicable international humanitarian law and human rights law;

9. *Reaffirms*, consistent with international humanitarian law, the need for all parties to ensure the safety of civilians, including those receiving assistance, as well as the need to ensure the security of humanitarian personnel and United Nations and its associated personnel, and *urges* all parties to facilitate the delivery of humanitarian assistance, as well as rapid, safe and unhindered access for humanitarian actors to reach people in need of humanitarian assistance, including medical assistance;

10. *Calls on* all parties to facilitate the evacuation by concerned States and international organizations of their civilians and personnel from Yemen and *commends* steps already taken in this regard;

11. *Reaffirms* the principle of the inviolability of diplomatic and consular premises and the obligations of host Governments, including under the 1961 Vienna Convention on Diplomatic Relations and under the 1963 Vienna Convention on Consular Relations, to take all appropriate steps to protect diplomatic and consular premises against any intrusion or damage, and to prevent any disturbance of the peace of these missions or impairment of their dignity;

12. *Requests* the Secretary-General to intensify his efforts in order to facilitate the delivery of humanitarian assistance and evacuation, including the establishment of humanitarian pauses, as appropriate, in coordination with the Government of Yemen, and *calls on* Yemeni parties to cooperate with the Secretary-General to deliver humanitarian aid to those in need;

13. *Further requests* the Secretary-General to intensify his good offices role in order to enable a resumption of a peaceful, inclusive, orderly and Yemeni-led political transition process that meets the legitimate demands and aspirations of the Yemeni people, including women, for peaceful change and meaningful political, economic and social reform, as set out in the Gulf Cooperation Council Initiative and Implementation Mechanism and the outcomes of the comprehensive National

Dialogue conference, and *stresses* the importance of the United Nations' close coordination with international partners, in particular the Gulf Cooperation Council, Group of Ambassadors in Sana'a, and other actors, in order to contribute to a successful transition;

Arms embargo

14. *Decides* that all Member States shall immediately take the necessary measures to prevent the direct or indirect supply, sale or transfer to, or for the benefit of Ali Abdullah Saleh, Abdullah Yahya Al Hakim, Abd Al-Khaliq Al-Huthi, and the individuals and entities designated by the Committee established pursuant to paragraph 19 of resolution 2140 (2014) (hereinafter referred to as "the Committee") pursuant to paragraph 20 (d) of this resolution, the individuals and entities listed in the annex of this resolution, and those acting on their behalf or at their direction in Yemen, from or through their territories or by their nationals, or using their flag vessels or aircraft, of arms and related materiel of all types, including weapons and ammunition, military vehicles and equipment, paramilitary equipment, and spare parts for the aforementioned, and technical assistance, training, financial or other assistance, related to military activities or the provision, maintenance or use of any arms and related materiel, including the provision of armed mercenary personnel whether or not originating in their territories;

15. *Calls upon* Member States, in particular States neighbouring Yemen, to inspect, in accordance with their national authorities and legislation and consistent with international law, in particular the law of the sea and relevant international civil aviation agreements, all cargo to Yemen, in their territory, including seaports and airports, if the State concerned has information that provides reasonable grounds to believe the cargo contains items the supply, sale, or transfer of which is prohibited by paragraph 14 of this resolution for the purpose of ensuring strict implementation of those provisions;

16. *Decides* to authorize all Member States to, and that all Member States shall, upon discovery of items the supply, sale, or transfer of which is prohibited by paragraph 14 of this resolution, seize and dispose (such as through destruction, rendering inoperable, storage or transferring to a State other than the originating or destination States for disposal) of such items and *decides* further that all Member States shall cooperate in such efforts;

17. *Requires* any Member State when it undertakes an inspection pursuant to paragraph 15 of this resolution, to submit promptly an initial written report to the Committee containing, in particular, explanation of the grounds for the inspections, the results of such inspections, and whether or not cooperation was provided, and, if prohibited items for supply, sale, or transfer are found, further *requires* such Member States to submit to the Committee within 30 days a subsequent written report containing relevant details on the inspection, seizure, and disposal, and relevant details of the transfer, including a description of the items, their origin and intended destination, if this information is not in the initial report;

Additional designation criteria

18. *Reaffirms* the designation criteria set out in paragraph 17 of resolution 2140 (2014), the measures imposed by paragraphs 11 and 15 of the same and *stresses* the importance of their full implementation;

19. *Reaffirms* paragraph 18 of resolution 2140 (2014), and *underscores* that acts that threaten the peace, security, or stability of Yemen may also include the violations of the arms embargo imposed by paragraph 14 or obstructing the delivery of humanitarian assistance to Yemen or access to, or distribution of, humanitarian assistance in Yemen;

Mandate of the Sanctions Committee

20. *Decides* that the Committee established pursuant to paragraph 19 of resolution 2140 (2014)shall also undertake the following tasks:

(a) monitoring implementation of the measures imposed in paragraph 14 of this resolution;

(b) seeking from all States whatever information it may consider useful regarding the actions taken by them to implement effectively the measures imposed by paragraph 14 above;

(c) examining and taking appropriate action on information regarding alleged non-compliance with the measures contained by this resolution;

(d) designating as may be necessary additional individuals and entities subject to the measures imposed by paragraph 14 above;

Mandate of the Panel of Experts

21. *Decides* that the mandate of the Panel of Experts established pursuant to paragraph 21 of resolution 2140 (2014) and renewed by resolution 2204 (2015) shall also include monitoring implementation of the measures imposed by paragraph 14;

22. *Requests* the Secretary-General, having due regard for the increased mandate of the Panel of Experts, to increase the Panel to five members, and make the necessary financial and security arrangements to support the work of the Panel;

23. *Calls upon* the Panel of Experts to cooperate actively with other Panels or Groups of Experts established by the Security Council, including the 1267 Monitoring Team, as relevant to the implementation of their mandate;

Commitment to review

24. *Reaffirms* its readiness to take further measures in case of non-implementation by any Yemeni party of this resolution and resolution 2201 (2015);

25. *Decides* to remain actively seized of the matter.

Annex

1. Abdulmalik al-Houthi

Abdul Malik al Houthi is a leader of a group that has engaged in acts that threaten the peace, security, or stability of Yemen.

In September 2014, Houthi forces captured Sanaa and in January 2015 they attempted to unilaterally replace the legitimate government of Yemen with an illegitimate governing authority that the Houthis dominated. Al-Houthi assumed the leadership of Yemen's Houthi movement in 2004 after the death of his brother, Hussein Badredden al-Houthi. As leader of the group, al-Houthi has repeatedly threatened Yemeni authorities with further unrest if they do not respond to his demands and detained President Hadi, Prime Minister, and key cabinet members. Hadi subsequently escaped to Aden. The Houthis then launched another offensive towards Aden assisted by military units loyal to former president Saleh and his son, Ahmed Ali Saleh.

2. Ahmed Ali Abdullah Saleh

Ahmed Ali Saleh has engaged in acts that threaten the peace, security, and stability of Yemen.

Ahmed Ali Saleh has been working to undermine President Hadi's authority, thwart Hadi's attempts to reform the military, and hinder Yemen's peaceful transition to democracy. Saleh played a key role in facilitating the Houthi military expansion. As of mid-February 2013, Ahmed Ali Saleh had issued thousands of new rifles to Republican Guard brigades and unidentified tribal shaykhs. The weapons were originally procured in 2010 and reserved to purchase the loyalties of the recipients for political gain at a later date.

After Saleh's father, former Republic of Yemen President Ali Abdullah Saleh, stepped down as President of Yemen in 2011, Ahmed Ali Saleh retained his post as commander of Yemen's Republican Guard. A little over a year later, Saleh was dismissed by President Hadi but he retained significant influence within the Yemeni military, even after he was removed from command. Ali Abdullah Saleh was designated by the UN under UNSCR 2140 in November 2014.

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Report of the Secretary-General on the situation concerning Western Sahara

I. Introduction

1. The present report is submitted pursuant to Security Council resolution 2152 (2014), by which the Council extended the mandate of the United Nations Mission for the Referendum in Western Sahara (MINURSO) until 30 April 2015 and requested me to provide a report to it on the situation in Western Sahara well before the end of the mandate period. It covers developments since my report dated 10 April 2014 (S/2014/258) and describes the situation on the ground, the status and progress of the negotiations on the future of Western Sahara, the implementation of resolution 2152 (2014) and the existing challenges to the Mission's operations and steps taken to address them, as requested by the Council in its resolution 2152 (2014).

II. Recent developments

2. The situation in Western Sahara, as it presents itself to MINURSO, is generally calm. The ceasefire continues to hold. Tensions between the parties and periodic incidents and demonstrations did not have a major effect on the overall environment during the period.

3. West of the berm, public life proceeded peacefully and included large gatherings at social events in urban areas without major incidents. On the occasions MINURSO was able to witness, an extensive presence of Moroccan security forces was noted. This part of Western Sahara continued to receive significant Moroccan public infrastructure investments, notably in roads and port facilities in Boujdour and Dakhla.

4. Thirteen foreign delegations from national legislatures, diplomatic missions and governmental and non-governmental institutions, as well as journalists and academic researchers, visited MINURSO headquarters during the reporting period and were informed about the Mission's mandate and activities. According to local authorities, some 50 additional delegations conducted visits. Also according to local authorities, 18 delegations and 8 individual travellers, mostly European supporters of Western Saharan self-determination, researchers and media workers alleged to have misrepresented their purpose, disturbed public order or refused to coordinate with the authorities, were excluded or expelled.

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5. A level of discontent was perceptible among the Western Saharan population west of the berm, illustrated in intermittent demonstrations throughout the reporting period in Laayoune and other towns. These events aimed to draw attention to human rights concerns, socioeconomic issues and political demands, including the right to self-determination, with youth emphasizing the lack of employment opportunities and organizing informal associations to press for redress. These protests were small in scale and the Moroccan security forces dispersed them quickly. On several occasions, credible reports were received about the disproportionate use of force on the part of the security forces and hostile actions on the part of the demonstrators in response.

6. On the 6 November 2014 anniversary of the 1975 "Green March", King Mohammed VI stated that "the Sahara will remain part of Morocco until the end of time". Regarding the negotiating process, he declared that "[t]he fact that Morocco chose to cooperate in good faith with all parties should not be interpreted as a sign of weakness; nor should it be used as a means to ask for more concessions". He continued that "[t]he autonomy initiative is the maximum Morocco can offer ... to achieve a final solution to this regional conflict". He further stressed that "Morocco's sovereignty over its entire territory is effective, inalienable and non-negotiable". He also indicated that Morocco was "willing to be more open to all international human rights bodies and organizations that abide by the principles of neutrality and objectivity in dealing with Moroccan issues", while rejecting "any attempt to reconsider the principles and criteria of the negotiating process and any attempt to revise and expand the mandate of MINURSO to include such matters as monitoring of the human rights situation". The King affirmed support for the October 2013 Moroccan Economic, Social and Environmental Council's proposed development plans for the so-called "southern provinces", which pertain to Western Sahara and areas to the north. He noted the need to address malfunctions in the governance of those areas and also announced the implementation of "advanced regionalization". Three government bills submitted on 29 January 2015 propose to devolve more powers to the local level and are pending parliamentary review. In its 8 November reaction, Frente Polisario strongly criticized the King's speech and called it a "clear announcement of rebellion against the Charter of the United Nations and its resolutions, which define the nature of the Western Sahara problem, the framework for a solution and the basis of the negotiating process ... and specify clearly and unambiguously that the Western Sahara issue is an issue of decolonization whose two parties are Frente Polisario and the Kingdom of Morocco and whose solution resides in enabling this people to exercise its inalienable right to self-determination and independence". It called on the international community "to hasten in taking the positions and measures needed to confront this dangerous intransigence and oblige the Kingdom of Morocco to obey the requirements of international law and humanitarian law". It also called on the United Nations to apply the 1991 Settlement Plan of the United Nations and the Organization of African Unity and stop the plundering of Western Sahara's resources.

7. From 12 to 14 March 2015, a Swiss non-governmental organization the Crans-Montana Forum, held an event in what it referred to as "Dakhla, Morocco". The Permanent Representative of Morocco informed me by letter that the Forum's focus had been Africa's economic development and South-South cooperation, that it had been attended by delegates from 115 countries and that 38 young African entrepreneurs, including 8 Saharans from Laayoune and Dakhla, had been

nominated for awards. Frente Polisario and the African Union contested the venue of this Forum on the basis that the legal status of Dakhla and the rest of Western Sahara had yet to be determined through negotiations. Following press reports of a high-level United Nations presence, my spokesperson issued a note to correspondents indicating that my Special Advisor on Innovative Financing had attended exclusively in his private capacity and that I had not delegated him or anyone else to represent me or the United Nations. He further noted that the definitive status of Western Sahara was the object of a negotiating process being conducted under my auspices in accordance with the relevant United Nations resolutions.

8. In the refugee camps near Tindouf, Algeria, public life and social activities were conducted peacefully and in a relatively calm atmosphere. However, the severe living conditions declined further as a result of reductions in international humanitarian aid (see para. 77 below), and the camp inhabitants continued to suffer from chronic unemployment, reduced remittances from limited employment opportunities abroad and lower income from informal trade across the border between Algeria and Mauritania. Sixteen international delegations visited the MINURSO liaison office in Tindouf and were informed about the Mission's mandate and activities.

9. Within parts of the refugee community, after 40 years in refugee camps, increasingly difficult economic conditions and no visible progress towards a political solution, frustration is coalescing. Individuals returning from higher education studies abroad bring greater civic and political awareness and compare the hardship in the camps with living standards elsewhere, applying pressure on the Frente Polisario leadership to secure better lives for camp inhabitants. Frente Polisario has also alerted MINURSO to the "hundreds and hundreds of idle youths" affected by an environment that includes proximity to smuggling routes and extremist activity in the Sahel.

10. These conditions present political, economic and security concerns. Two demonstrations were held in the Laayoune camp and five in Rabouni during the reporting period. On one occasion observed by a MINURSO officer, Frente Polisario security forces intervened to prevent demonstrators from entering the premises of the Secretary-General of Frente Polisario. Frente Polisario authorities subsequently undertook to address the demonstrators' concerns through broader consultative and inclusive governance processes.

11. Four incidents of arson in public buildings occurred in the Smara, Dakhla, Laayoune and Awsard camps in May and June. Frente Polisario investigations revealed attempted sabotage. Also in June, a group of young men engaged in an aggressive discussion with the Wali of Laayoune camp, subsequently setting fire to his office and stoning his vehicle. Several suspected perpetrators were detained and later released.

12. East of the berm, in the north-eastern part of Western Sahara, MINURSO observed an increase in civilian activities and local infrastructure construction in six villages, evidently reflecting the programme approved by the "Sahrawi National Council" in April 2014 to "consolidate the exercise of sovereignty in the liberated territories". Largely abandoned in 1976, several areas are now seeing a return of original inhabitants from the refugee camps, particularly during the milder climate of summer. However, several of the areas witnessing initial development remain

highly contaminated by mines and explosive remnants of war, limiting any additional growth, curtailing livelihoods and placing residents at risk.

13. During the reporting period, the Secretary-General of Frente Polisario wrote to me on 11 occasions, reiterating his concerns about anomalies in the part of Western Sahara west of the berm. The letters raised allegations of human rights violations, disproportionate use of force and illicit exploitation of natural resources and called repeatedly on the United Nations to implement appropriate remedies, arrange the release of all Western Saharan political prisoners and institute a human rights monitoring mechanism for Western Sahara.

III. Activities of my Personal Envoy

14. Following the publication of my previous report on 10 April 2014 (S/2014/258), Morocco expressed strong reservations regarding some elements of the report, the contours of the negotiating process and the mandate of MINURSO. It agreed in principle to the continuation of my Personal Envoy's bilateral consultations and shuttle diplomacy and to the deployment of my new Special Representative for Western Sahara and head of MINURSO, but asked to enter into a dialogue on the issues that concerned it before re-engaging, stating that it sought clarification for the purpose of ensuring that the negotiating process would proceed smoothly, including with regard to the preparation of the present report. On 22 January 2015, King Mohammed VI and I spoke by telephone and agreed on the way forward. I confirmed that reports to the Council would remain objective and reflect facts. In reply, the King confirmed that Morocco welcomed the return of my Personal Envoy and the deployment of my new Special Representative and head of MINURSO to Laayoune.

15. After the call, my Personal Envoy undertook the first set of consultations in the region in almost a year to re-establish contact with interlocutors old and new, strengthen confidence in the negotiating process and clarify the way forward on the basis of the approach identified in my previous report. From 11 to 23 February 2015, he visited Rabat, Rabouni, Nouakchott and Algiers. During his meetings, he highlighted the importance of negotiating without preconditions and in good faith and urged the parties to move beyond their respective proposals by seeking innovative approaches that could help to achieve progress towards "a mutually acceptable political solution, which will provide for the self-determination of the people of Western Sahara".

16. In Rabat, my Personal Envoy met with the Minister for Foreign Affairs, Salaheddine Mezouar, the Minister-Delegate, Mbarka Bouaida, and other high-level officials. Mr. Mezouar welcomed the telephone call between the King and myself, highlighting that it had provided the basis for future interactions. He expressed hope that the negotiating process would develop in a serene way and without surprises. He reiterated the long-standing position of Morocco that the autonomy proposal it had presented in 2007 should serve as the basis for negotiation, arguing that the Security Council had recognized its pre-eminence. As on previous occasions, the Minister stressed the role of Algeria in the conflict and noted that Morocco, a State Member of the United Nations, and Frente Polisario, a non-governmental movement, should not be treated on an equal footing.

17. In Rabouni, near Tindouf, my Personal Envoy met with the Secretary-General of Frente Polisario, Mohammed Abdelaziz; the Coordinator of Frente Polisario with MINURSO, M'hamed Khaddad; the head of Frente Polisario's negotiating delegation, Khatri Adduh, and other representatives of the movement. His interlocutors expressed disappointment at the lack of progress in the negotiating process, voiced regret that I had provided assurances to Morocco without consulting them as the other party and manifested their unhappiness over the lack of attention that they perceived from the United Nations. They stressed that, as one of the two parties to the conflict, they should be treated on an equal basis. All interlocutors expressed uneasiness regarding the growing frustration in the camps, not only among Saharan youth, but increasingly within the military as well. They warned that their appeals for patience in the face of growing disillusionment with the negotiating process were becoming ineffective owing to the lack of progress.

18. In Nouakchott, President Mohamed Ould Abdel Aziz and the new Minister for Foreign Affairs, Vatma Vall Mint Soueina, reiterated Mauritania's long-standing position of "positive neutrality" in this conflict. The President highlighted some of the negative spillover effects of the dispute, in particular the considerable quantity of cannabis resin arriving at the northern borders of his country for transit into Mali and beyond. He underlined that this phenomenon posed a serious security threat to all countries in the Sahel-Saharan region in that it helped to finance criminal, extremist and terrorist groups.

19. In Algiers, President Abdelaziz Bouteflika received my Personal Envoy after meetings with Prime Minister Abdelmalek Sellal, the Minister for Foreign Affairs, Ramtane Lamamra and the Minister-Delegate, Abdelkader Messahel. The Algerian authorities reiterated their long-standing position regarding the importance of holding a referendum of self-determination to determine the future of Western Sahara. In this regard, they insisted on the significance of a balanced negotiating process under the auspices of the United Nations. They also stated that Algeria was not a party to the conflict. All interlocutors criticized the United Nations for having overstepped its prerogatives in providing "unilateral and counterproductive" assurances to Morocco, in particular regarding the present report, without consulting the Security Council or the other party. The Prime Minister expressed fear that support for radical groups or a return to military hostilities would grow if the refugee population lost hope that a political solution could be found.

20. From 22 to 29 March, my Personal Envoy again travelled to the region to consult on the next steps, including the preparation of the present report, visiting successively Nouakchott, Rabouni, Rabat and Algiers. At each stop, he emphasized the dangers of the situation in the Sahel-Saharan region, the growing frustrations in the refugee camps and the importance of an early solution to the Western Sahara conflict. In Rabouni and Rabat, he sought useful information that could assist in making the present report a contribution to the negotiating process. With regard to the next steps, a consensus emerged that a return to face-to-face discussions between the parties was premature and that my Personal Envoy should continue his programme of bilateral consultations and shuttle diplomacy for the foreseeable future.

21. My Personal Envoy also resumed his consultations with members of the Group of Friends, visiting successively, Madrid, Paris, London, Moscow and Washington, D.C. In the discussions, my Personal Envoy's interlocutors expressed satisfaction

with the resumption of the negotiating process and reiterated their full support for his efforts. For his part, my Personal Envoy highlighted the need to induce the parties to show flexibility in their long-standing positions. He also drew attention to the growing security threats in the Sahel-Saharan region, including a possible future nexus between the frustrated refugee population and the expanded activities of criminal, extremist and terrorist groups. He emphasized that such threats further underscored the importance of an early solution to the Western Sahara conflict. In Madrid, he also expressed his deep appreciation for the continuing facilitation of his mission by the Government of Spain through the provision of a Spanish Air Force aircraft for his travels within the North African region.

IV. Activities of the United Nations Mission for the Referendum in Western Sahara

22. The period during which my Special Representative was unable to deploy to MINURSO marked a decline in Mission engagement with the authorities west of the berm. This included a decline in contacts with senior officials, whose interlocutor in implementing the mandate of MINURSO is normally the Special Representative.

A. Operational activities

23. As at 31 March 2015, the military component of MINURSO stood at 203 personnel, 3 of whom were female, against the authorized strength of 246. The military component remains deployed at nine team sites and at liaison offices in Tindouf, Algeria, and Dakhla, Western Sahara. The MINURSO military observer strength has been increased by 15 to 218, with the additional contributions arriving from existing and new troop contributors. However, prolonged entry processes for a number of incoming military personnel contributed to stretching operational capacity and strained remaining observer assets for part of the period. On 31 March, MINURSO was notified verbally that the pending visa applications had been approved.

24. From 1 April 2014 to 31 March 2015, MINURSO conducted 9,502 ground patrols and 493 aerial patrols to visit and monitor units of the Royal Moroccan Army and the military forces of Frente Polisario for adherence to the military agreements. In the course of the patrols, MINURSO military observers regularly monitored 570 units, 29 training areas and 316 observation posts, as well as 355 notified operational activities by the Royal Moroccan Army west of the berm. East of the berm, military observers regularly monitored 93 units, 8 training areas and 38 observation posts, as well as 4 notified operational activities by Frente Polisario military forces. MINURSO observed eight demonstrations by Frente Polisario supporters near the berm to verify their exclusively civilian nature and defuse or prevent possible tensions. On rare occasions, MINURSO military observers faced verbal aggression by demonstrators expressing dissatisfaction with the lack of political progress and the failure of the United Nations to achieve a resolution. In written communications with the Force Commander, the Royal Moroccan Army complained that such demonstrations constituted violations of military agreement No.1 and increased the risk of escalation between the parties.

25. MINURSO observed one new violation of freedom of movement by the Royal Moroccan Army. Nine long-standing violations remained, as indicated in my previous report (S/2014/258, para. 35). The Royal Moroccan Army removed 123 of the 325 observation posts comprising its second line of defence 15 kilometres from the berm, a major long-standing violation since September 2008. As at 9 March 2015, 121 observation posts remained operational. Some 1,000 to 1,200 Moroccan soldiers were redeployed to reinforce strong points already established on the berm. The Royal Moroccan Army continued to contest notifications of long-standing violations of the ceasefire regime, indicating that "situational necessities" unrelated to the ceasefire were involved. East of the berm, MINURSO recorded two new violations and two freedom-of-movement violations by Frente Polisario forces. Three long-standing violations remained, as indicated in my previous report (ibid.). In their discussions with MINURSO, both parties reiterated their commitment to the ceasefire.

26. The Mission's assessment is that both parties remain fully committed to and respectful of the ceasefire and that their observed violations do not jeopardize it in the medium term. Rather, as has been observed in previous reports, they have resulted in a gradual shift in the original military status quo over the years.

27. MINURSO continues to advocate that any discrepancies vis-à-vis the determination of ceasefire monitoring violations and potential security concerns in that context be addressed in the framework of military agreement No.1. The Mission revived dedicated working group discussions with the parties that were initiated in November 2013 to clarify understandings of the agreement, reconcile variations in approach, address the concerns put forward by each party with regard to application of the agreement in the current operational environment and strengthen the MINURSO monitoring regime overall, in particular with regard to access to military facilities and violation definitions.

28. In March, April and June 2014, three rounds of discussions were held with representatives of the Royal Moroccan Army. In March, May, June and September 2014, four rounds were held with representatives of the Frente Polisario forces. MINURSO considered the parties' initial proposals for potential adjustments to military agreement No.1 and identified respective areas of concern.

29. In November 2014, heavy rains and massive flooding caused extensive damage to Royal Moroccan Army and Frente Polisario facilities, and the Royal Moroccan Army forwarded a number of requests for and notifications of repairs to MINURSO. Team sites located east of the berm were also affected by the storms, which temporarily disrupted the Mission supply chain. Frente Polisario authorities provided timely and significant support for MINURSO during the disruption.

30. Contamination of Western Sahara by landmines and explosive remnants of war continues to endanger the lives of local, nomadic and refugee populations, as well as MINURSO military observers and logistical teams. As at 31 March 2015, 57 cluster strike areas and 41 minefields remained to be addressed. Many are located in areas that have recently seen increased civilian activity. East of the berm, four accidents occurred, in which one civilian and one soldier were killed and five civilians and five soldiers injured. West of the berm, six incidents occurred in which two civilians and one soldier were killed and three civilians and three soldiers injured.

31. East of the berm, humanitarian clearance of landmines and explosive remnants of war, route verification, risk education and capacity development activities were undertaken by the MINURSO Mine Action Coordination Centre, in partnership with the international non-governmental organizations Action on Armed Violence and Norwegian People's Aid, the local non-governmental organization Sahrawi Campaign to Ban Landmines, and commercial contractors Mechem and Mine Tech International. Demining teams cleared 4,608,423 m^2 of land and verified 1,766,859 m^2 of land along MINURSO patrol routes east of the berm; the Royal Moroccan Army reported clearance of over 222,800,000 m^2 of land west of the berm.

32. Morocco, Frente Polisario and Algeria have primary responsibility for the security of United Nations civilian and military staff in the respective Mission locations. At the request of the Mission, Frente Polisario also provides MINURSO patrols east of the berm with armed escorts in the vicinity of the Mauritanian border. In addition, the Directorate-General for Humanitarian Aid and Civil Protection of the European Commission and the Spanish Agency for International Development Cooperation have funded additional capacities, including an international security officer integrated into the MINURSO security management system, to increase security for humanitarian activities and humanitarian personnel in the camps. Through its liaison office in Tindouf, MINURSO supports the United Nations agencies on the ground. The joint security coordination committee continued to provide a mechanism for cooperation between the United Nations, donors, humanitarian actors and Frente Polisario, enabling stakeholders to exchange information and take mitigation measures. My designated official for security held regular exchanges with the United Nations humanitarian agencies in the refugee camps near Tindouf.

33. While the security environment in Western Sahara appears generally stable, the longer-term effects of regional instability remain of concern for the Mission, the parties and their neighbours, all of whom have taken additional security measures to prevent infiltration by radical groups. In November 2014, the Moroccan Ministry of the Interior announced the arrest of four French nationals allegedly linked to terrorist groups, three of whom were apprehended in Laayoune. Algerian authorities alerted MINURSO to the suspected transport of explosives into or via Tindouf province in mid-November 2014; the two vehicles under surveillance were subsequently stopped in Mauritania. On 4 December 2014, Frente Polisario security forces intercepted approximately 120 pounds of cannabis resin from armed smugglers operating through the east of the berm, the destruction of which MINURSO was invited to witness in June. During the period, Frente Polisario reinforced and maintained strengthened security around the United Nations compound in Tifariti.

34. Given the potential effects of increasing regional insecurity, MINURSO enhanced attention to and assessment of security conditions in its area of operation, requiring military observers to maintain a state of high alert and to keep the Mission abreast of suspected illegal activities that could affect their safety. My Special Representative and the Department of Safety and Security have initiated a reassessment of security precautions and procedures in cooperation with the parties and with Algeria. Since April 2014, the Department has conducted two comprehensive compliance evaluations of the Mission security system, and its recommendations are now being implemented.

35. The Department of Peacekeeping Operations conducted a military capability study of the MINURSO military component in March 2015. The study reviewed the current configuration and operational capacities relative to mandated tasks, existing challenges and projected risks to mandate implementation and personnel, factoring in regional security dynamics. The effect of the additional 15 observers could not yet be fully assessed as it was offset by delays in other incoming observer deployments. Preliminary findings suggest that, while adequately positioned at the authorized strength to execute mandate requirements with the cooperation with the parties, adjustments in patrol route variations, team site rotations and site-specific security assessments could enhance operational delivery and the safety of observers. The conclusions and recommendations from the capability study will be finalized in the coming month and presented to MINURSO troop contributors.

B. Substantive civilian activities

36. During the early part of the reporting period, my outgoing Special Representative maintained constructive contacts with the parties on all issues related to the Mission mandate, primarily through the respective coordination offices and directly with Frente Polisario leadership. During the remainder of the period, the acting head of Mission, as well as the Political Affairs Office and the liaison office in Tindouf, continued interactions to the extent possible pending the arrival of my new Special Representative. Political affairs officers regularly visited Rabat from May to July 2014, resuming the visits after the deployment of my new Special Representative, to inform the diplomatic community about developments in the area of operations and Mission activities. As noted in paragraph 4 above, visitors to Laayoune and Tindouf were provided with briefings and assessments to better understand the local situation and the work of MINURSO.

37. My new Special Representative, Kim Bolduc, arrived in the Mission on 6 February 2015, following the conclusion of her predecessor's assignment on 31 July 2014. Beginning on 15 November 2014, the MINURSO leadership function was performed by Ms. Bolduc from Headquarters in New York. Upon deployment, she was assured by the Moroccan authorities of their intention to cooperate fully with MINURSO in all matters concerning implementation of the Mission's mandate as defined by the Security Council. They indicated that prior agreements and procedures would be maintained.

38. The Frente Polisario leadership renewed its commitment to full support for and cooperation with my Special Representative in implementing the Mission's mandate. East of the berm and in the refugee camps, access by MINURSO and United Nations agencies to interlocutors remained unhindered, enabling free interaction with Frente Polisario representatives and refugees, as well as local and international civil society organizations. The liaison office in Tindouf maintained constructive cooperation with the civilian and military components of Frente Polisario on all matters related to Mission mandate implementation.

39. Both parties continue to diverge significantly in their interpretation of the MINURSO mandate. Morocco considers the mandate to be limited to ceasefire and military matters, demining and logistical support for confidence-building measures. Frente Polisario considers that the organization of a referendum for self-determination remains its central element. These opposing views have a direct

impact on the credibility of the Mission vis-à-vis the parties, affecting its ability to fully implement its mandate and exercise standard peacekeeping functions. For the United Nations, the successive Security Council resolutions define the mandate of the United Nations Mission for the Referendum in Western Sahara. The standard peacekeeping functions performed by United Nations operations throughout the world underpin effective mandate implementation, including assessments of and reporting on local conditions that may affect their operations and the political processes.

40. The perception of MINURSO and United Nations impartiality continues to be affected by the fact that MINURSO vehicles operate with Moroccan licence plates west of the berm. Logistical and administrative complications also arise, since Moroccan licence plates must be removed and replaced by United Nations plates when MINURSO vehicles cross east of the berm and travel outside the area of operations. Implementation of the March 2014 verbal agreement of the Moroccan authorities to gradually replace Moroccan licence plates with United Nations licence plates for MINURSO vehicles, as agreed with my previous Special Representative (see S/2014/258, para. 50), has not begun. The Minister for Foreign Affairs reiterated this commitment to my new Special Representative in February 2015.

V. Humanitarian activities and human rights

A. Persons unaccounted for in the conflict

41. The International Committee of the Red Cross, playing a role as neutral intermediary, continued to work with the parties and families concerned in treating the cases of persons still unaccounted for in relation to the past conflict.

B. Assistance to and protection of Western Saharan refugees

42. In accordance with its mandate, the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) continued to provide international protection and, together with its partners, basic life-saving assistance to refugees in the camps near Tindouf. This included the implementation of multisectoral activities in the areas of water, sanitation, health, nutrition, shelter and distribution of non-food items. UNHCR continued to carry out its mandated responsibilities in protection and community services through regular field visits and a network of community refugee outreach workers in all camps. Pending the registration of the refugees in the camps near Tindouf, the humanitarian assistance provided by UNHCR and the World Food Programme (WFP) continued to be based on a population planning figure of 90,000 vulnerable refugees, with WFP furnishing an additional 35,000 food rations to persons with poor nutritional status in the camps.

43. In the health sector, UNHCR and its partners continued to cover up to 60 per cent of the needs in the refugee camps. Chronic conditions such as diabetes, high blood pressure, anaemia, heart disease and hepatitis B remained the main health concerns. The key gaps faced in providing basic health care were related to the maintenance and development of the health infrastructure. UNHCR supported multidisciplinary medical commissions to provide specialized consultations to refugees in the camps on a quarterly basis. The preventive health programme aimed

at reducing chronic malnutrition and anaemia in the camps targeted more than 22,000 persons of concern in 2014, including children under 5 years of age and pregnant and lactating women.

44. Working through its partner organization, UNHCR provided financial support to 1,719 primary, intermediate and secondary school teachers in five camps, ensuring that all children between the ages of 6 and 11 were enrolled in primary education and that all children between the ages of 12 and 14 were enrolled in intermediate school. UNHCR partners also facilitated capacity-building training focusing on better teaching and school management. For its part, WFP continued to support the school feeding programme. Altogether, 450 young refugees were enrolled in vocational training courses in the camps.

45. During the reporting period, UNHCR also continued to ensure the supply of potable water to all refugees living in the five camps. Preventive plans for the regular maintenance and rehabilitation of water facilities were implemented to optimize the use of the existing water infrastructure. Efforts and resources continue to be focused on the extension of the water distribution network in all camps.

46. Hygiene kits were distributed to 38,450 women and girls of reproductive age. Through its partners, UNHCR has also procured raw materials for the production of bleach and soap, which were distributed to health, water and education facilities.

47. UNHCR has been working in close collaboration with relevant basic service providers for cases of sexual and gender-based violence to ensure that referral mechanisms and quality response services are available in terms of legal, medical and psychosocial support.

C. Confidence-building measures

48. In conformity with its mandate and principles, and with the cooperation of both the Government of Morocco and Frente Polisario, UNHCR implemented the confidence-building measures programme from April to June 2014, striving to facilitate contact and communication between refugees in the camps near Tindouf and their families west of the berm. Family visits, cultural seminars and coordination meetings in Geneva between the two parties, with the two neighbouring States, Algeria and Mauritania as observers, remained the three fundamental components of the updated January 2012 plan of action for the confidence-building measures programme. MINURSO supported the programme by providing medical staff and police officers to facilitate preparations and escort beneficiaries to their destinations.

49. A total of 20,699 individuals have benefited from the family visits programme since 2004. Of that total, 997 persons participated in the family visits from January to June 2014, including 641 from the Saharan refugee camps near Tindouf and 356 from west of the berm. Flights for the family visits have been suspended since June 2014 because of disagreements between the two parties over the list of candidates for family visits. Since then, no coordination meeting has taken place. UNHCR remains ready to facilitate the dialogue required for prompt resumption of the programme through the existing coordination mechanism.

D. Human rights

50. As jointly agreed, a technical team from the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights (OHCHR) visited Laayoune and Dakhla in Western Sahara from 28 April to 2 May 2014 to help prepare the visit of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights to Morocco.

51. At the invitation of King Mohamed VI, the then High Commissioner, Navi Pillay, visited Morocco from 27 to 29 May 2014 and met with the King, high-level officials and representatives of the National Human Rights Council, the Economic, Social and Environmental Council and representatives of civil society. The High Commissioner noted the great strides made by Morocco towards better promotion and protection of human rights. At the same time, she raised human rights concerns, including in Western Sahara. She encouraged the Government of Morocco to ensure that human rights and fundamental freedoms were equally protected in Morocco and Western Sahara. She stressed that, for the National Human Rights Council to be able to effectively promote and protect human rights in Western Sahara, local and national authorities needed to cooperate fully with the institution, including by promptly replying to complaints. The High Commissioner expressed the readiness of OHCHR to provide technical assistance for the two regional offices of the National Human Rights Council.

52. The offices of the National Human Rights Council in Laayoune and Dakhla continued to carry out a range of activities, including monitoring demonstrations, visiting prisons and medical centres and organizing capacity-building activities for various stakeholders. The Council continued to monitor the implementation of the recommendations of the Equity and Reconciliation Commission for former victims of human rights violations. In 2014, the offices of the Council received 415 complaints of alleged violations of civil, political, economic and social rights in Western Sahara and carried out 20 fact-finding missions in follow up to some of the complaints.

53. During the reporting period, the Government of Morocco extended invitations to 10 special procedures mandate holders of the Human Rights Council. Nevertheless, no visits of special procedures mandate holders were undertaken west of the berm, for the most part owing to scheduling issues. Similarly, no special procedures mandate holders visited the refugee camps near Tindouf.

54. In March 2015, the Government of Morocco invited United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights, Zeid Ra'ad Al Hussein, to visit to Morocco in the course of the year. In addition, as jointly agreed, OHCHR would carry out a mission to Morocco and Western Sahara from 12 to 18 April 2015. OHCHR also agreed with the Government of Algeria, as the host country, and Frente Polisario regarding a mission to visit the refugee camps near Tindouf from 4 to 10 May 2015.

55. During the reporting period, some Saharan human rights organizations continued to face difficulties operating west of the berm, including their access to official premises, convocation of public events and holding of demonstrations. One of these organizations, l'Association sahraouie des victimes des violations graves des droits de l'homme, had applied for legal status. In March 2015, pursuant to a recommendation by the National Human Rights Council, the Moroccan authorities announced its registration. Another organization, l'Association el Ghad pour les droits de l'homme, was also registered.

56. According to some human rights organizations, the Moroccan authorities did not permit demonstrations in Western Sahara west of the berm during the reporting period, notably preventing demonstrations calling for self-determination, defending prisoners' rights or raising socioeconomic issues. Such gatherings continued to be forcibly dispersed, with allegations that Moroccan law enforcement officials used excessive force in suppressing demonstrations, including towards women and children. In some cases, protesters and activists were reportedly subjected to arbitrary arrest, torture, ill treatment and prosecution. Furthermore, reports indicate that very few injured protesters, including those detained, had access to a doctor. As a result, most were unable to obtain a medical certificate to formally document the violence to which they stated they had been subjected.

57. In its September 2014 presentation to the Human Rights Council concerning its visit to Morocco and Laayoune in Western Sahara in December 2013, the Working Group on Arbitrary Detention reported a number of concerns related to its area of competence, including the continued detention of the 21 Saharans belonging to the Gdeim Izik camp group, with some serving life sentences, following a decision of a military tribunal in 2013 (A/HRC/27/48/Add.5).

58. Information received from some human rights organizations indicates acute overcrowding, unsanitary conditions, malnutrition and limited or no access to medical care in places of deprivation of liberty. During the reporting period, local human rights organizations reported that at least three Western Saharans died while in custody in Western Sahara, including as a result of medical neglect. According to the Moroccan authorities, two of the deaths were suicides and one was the result of a prison brawl. On different occasions during the reporting period, Western Saharan prisoners and detainees went on hunger strikes in protest against their treatment and prison conditions. This led in a deterioration of the health of several persons deprived of their liberty.

59. One major positive development was Morocco's accession to the Optional Protocol to the Convention against Torture and Other Cruel, Inhuman or Degrading Treatment or Punishment on 24 November 2014. According to the Optional Protocol, the Government should establish or designate, within one year of accession, a national preventive mechanism with a mandate to monitor all places of detention and make recommendations to the authorities on preventing torture and ill-treatment, among other things. Accession to the Optional Protocol and the establishment of a national preventive mechanism should enhance prevention of torture and ill-treatment, including in Western Sahara.

60. Another positive development was the adoption by the Parliament of the new Code on Military Justice (No.108-13), which was published in the *Official Gazette* in January 2015 and is to enter into force six months after publication. The law excludes civilians from the jurisdiction of military tribunals, which are competent to deal solely with military crimes and offences committed in wartime. The law also provides for the creation of a military court of appeals. According to the new law, ongoing cases concerning civilians in military tribunals will be transferred to regular courts.

61. In its most recent concluding observations concerning Morocco, published at the end of 2014, the Committee on the Rights of the Child welcomed the Government's efforts in Western Sahara, including major demining efforts, and urged them to respect and protect the rights of all children living in Western Sahara

and to take all necessary measures to prevent violations of their rights (CRC/C/MAR/CO/3-4, CRC/C/OPAC/MAR/CO/1).

62. During the reporting period, investments in the territorial waters adjacent to Western Sahara continued to be a subject of contention between the Government of Morocco and Frente Polisario, given the long-standing status of Western Sahara. Some foreign oil companies, including Kosmos Energy, carried out oil exploration and exploratory drilling in Western Saharan territorial waters. In a letter dated 19 March 2015 addressed to me, the Permanent Representative of Morocco to the United Nations stated that "Kosmos Energy's exploration activities were preceded by wide consultations" with the local population, and "are governed by applicable international principles and standards ... in particular those deriving from the Charter of the United Nations and recalled in the letter S/2002/161 dated 29 January 2002 addressed to the President of the Security Council ... by [the] Under-Secretary-General for Legal Affairs". Frente Polisario and Western Saharan organizations spoke out against these activities repeatedly, pointing out that they had not been consulted and that any exploitation of resources, if found, would violate the legal opinion provided in the letter cited above. The Secretary-General of Frente Polisario, in a letter to me dated 26 January 2015, referred to the activities as a violation of international law.

63. Information concerning the human rights of refugees in the camps near Tindouf remains limited. A report by Human Rights Watch published in October 2014 stated that it had found no evidence of organized restrictions on freedom of movement or any pattern of serious abuse, but had found several areas of concern. These included the persistence of isolated claims of torture or mistreatment by Frente Polisario security forces, the use of military courts in investigating and trying civilians, the persistence of the remnants of slavery and Frente Polisario's monopolization of political speech. The report also highlighted the responsibility of Algeria, as the host country, for ensuring the protection of the human rights of all persons on its territory.

64. On several occasions during the reporting period, Frente Polisario sent letters to me reiterating its call for the creation of a permanent United Nations mechanism for the protection and monitoring of human rights in Western Sahara. In a letter sent to the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights dated 4 November 2014, Frente Polisario offered to facilitate the establishment of a OHCHR presence in the Tindouf camps, as well as in that part of Western Sahara east of the berm. Morocco insisted repeatedly that international human rights and refugee law required OHCHR to work with Algeria, the host country, in dealing with human rights in the refugee camps.

VI. African Union

65. MINURSO continued its cooperation with the observer delegation of the African Union in Laayoune, led by Yilma Tadesse (Ethiopia), as well as its support for the delegation with logistical and administrative assistance drawn from its existing resources.

66. In June 2014, the Special Envoy of the African Union for Western Sahara, former President Joaquim Chissano, met with my Deputy, my Personal Envoy and other United Nations officials in New York to convey the concern of the African

Union over the lack of progress in the ongoing negotiations. Mr. Chissano indicated that he sought to play a helpful role in raising awareness of the need to advance towards a settlement of the dispute.

67. In a letter dated 9 June 2014, the Permanent Representative of Morocco reiterated his Government's firm opposition to any involvement of the African Union in the question of Western Sahara, stating that the organization had lost any legitimacy to play a role in the settlement of the dispute by taking a position in favour of one party. In a second letter dated 1 July 2014, he rejected the appointment of Mr. Chissano as null and void.

68. In a letter to me dated 30 March 2015, the Chair of the African Union Commission, Nkosazana Dlamini Zuma, transmitted the communiqué of the 496th meeting of the Peace and Security Council, as well as her report on the Western Sahara negotiations and related issues, and asked that they be distributed to the Security Council and the General Assembly (A/69/861-S/2015/240). In a letter to me dated 5 April 2015, the Minister for Foreign Affairs of Morocco reiterated "the categorical opposition of the Kingdom of Morocco to any role for or involvement by the African Union, in whatever form, in the issue of the Moroccan Sahara" for a number of reasons explained in the letter addressed to me by His Majesty King Mohammed VI in June 2013 and reiterated in subsequent letters by Moroccan high officials. It was requested that the letter be circulated as a document of the Security Council and the General Assembly.

VII. Financial aspects

69. The General Assembly, by its resolution 68/296, appropriated the amount of $53.9 million for the maintenance of MINURSO for the period from 1 July 2014 to 30 June 2015. Should the Security Council decide to extend the mandate of MINURSO beyond 30 April 2015, the cost of maintaining the Mission until 30 June 2015 would be limited to the amounts approved by the General Assembly.

70. The proposed budget for MINURSO for the period from 1 July 2015 to 30 June 2016 in the amount of $53.3 million (exclusive of budgeted voluntary contributions in kind) has been submitted to the General Assembly for consideration during the second part of its resumed sixty-ninth session (A/69/730).

71. As at 25 March 2015, unpaid assessed contributions to the special account for MINURSO amounted to $40.5 million. As at 28 February 2015, amounts owed to troop contributors totalled $181,200. MINURSO also owed $114,000 for contingent-owned equipment as of 31 December 2014. Reimbursement of troop and contingent-owned equipment costs has been made for the period up to July 2014 and June 2014, respectively, owing to the insufficiency of cash in the special account of the Mission.

VIII. Observations and recommendations

72. Given the lack of progress towards a resolution of the dispute over the status of Western Sahara, which has not changed since my last report, the efforts of the United Nations through the work of my Personal Envoy and of MINURSO remain highly relevant.

73. Growing frustrations among Western Saharans, coupled with the geographic expansion of criminal and extremist networks in the Sahel-Sahara zone, present increased risks for the stability and security of the region. A settlement of the Western Sahara conflict would mitigate these potential risks. I reiterate my call on the parties to seriously engage with the Personal Envoy and to sustain and intensify their efforts to negotiate a "mutually acceptable political solution, which will provide for the self-determination of the people of Western Sahara" (see Security Council resolution 2152 (2014), para. 7). The members of the international community can, collectively and individually, play a critical role in this regard by encouraging the parties and the neighbouring States to remain engaged with my Personal Envoy.

74. In the light of last year's protracted period of clarifications at the request of Morocco, it is too early to provide an indication of whether or not the new approach of bilateral consultations and shuttle diplomacy launched by my Personal Envoy will prove fruitful. However, I expect that he will enjoy the effective support of the members of the Security Council and the full cooperation of the parties and neighbouring States as he moves forward, keeping me and the Security Council informed on the progress for which we all hope. Forty years after the beginning of this conflict and eight years after presentation of the parties' proposals, there can be no justification for continuing to maintain the status quo and failing to engage constructively and imaginatively in the search for a solution.

75. I welcome the parties' discussion of military agreement No.1 governing the ceasefire monitoring regime, and I call for continued and constructive cooperation with the Mission to move forward on the issues involved. MINURSO carries out a number of important duties that derive from Security Council resolutions and normal peacekeeping functions. I therefore seek the assistance of the Council in supporting the mandated role of MINURSO, upholding peacekeeping standards and the impartiality of the United Nations and ensuring that the conditions for successful operation of the Mission are met. The Mission's presence is relevant to ensure the parties' observation of the ceasefire and as a visible representation of the international community's commitment to achieving a resolution to the conflict. As broad engagement across sectors and communities is essential for any peacekeeping mission, I hope in particular that the remaining limitations on its "free interaction with all interlocutors", as cited in Security Council resolutions 2044 (2012), 2099 (2013) and 2152 (2014), will be removed. In this context, and in light of the continuing efforts of my Personal Envoy, and the continuing importance of MINURSO, I recommend that the Security Council extend the mandate of MINURSO for a further 12 months, until 30 April 2016.

76. I am concerned by the suspension of family visits and seminars under the confidence-building measures programme. I therefore encourage the parties to re-engage in dialogue and resolve any outstanding issues with the aim of resuming these important humanitarian programmes for the benefit of the entire Western Saharan population.

77. I urge the international community to provide urgent additional funding for the UNHCR mandate programme in the refugee camps near Tindouf, given the existing gaps in key areas of assistance such as protection, health, nutrition, food security, shelter, water and sanitation. At the same time, I note continuing questions about the

number of refugees requiring assistance. These highlight the need to address registration of the refugee population.

78. I commend the positive steps that Morocco has taken on the protection of human rights during the reporting period. These include the adoption of the new Code on Military Justice and accession to the Optional Protocol to the Convention against Torture and Other Cruel, Inhuman or Degrading Treatment or Punishment. However, while welcoming these developments, I call on the parties to continue and further enhance their cooperation with United Nations human rights mechanisms and OHCHR, including by facilitating OHCHR missions to Western Sahara and the refugee camps near Tindouf, with unrestricted access to all relevant stakeholders.

79. These missions and other future forms of cooperation between the parties and OHCHR and other United Nations human rights mechanisms should contribute to an independent and impartial understanding of the human rights situation in both Western Sahara and the camps, with the goal of ensuring protection of all, as well as to comprehensive and sustained implementation of international human rights standards by the parties. Human rights do not have borders; all stakeholders are thus obliged to uphold the fundamental freedoms and human rights of all people. It is vital that all human rights protection gaps and underlying human rights issues in situations of protracted conflict be addressed. This would also contribute to creating an environment conducive to the negotiating process.

80. In the light of increased interest in the natural resources of Western Sahara, it is timely to call upon all relevant actors to "recognize the principle that the interests of the inhabitants of these territories are paramount", in accordance with Chapter XI, Article 73 of the Charter of the United Nations.

81. In conclusion, I wish to thank my Personal Envoy for Western Sahara, Christopher Ross, for his repeated engagement with the parties and neighbouring States. I also thank my previous Special Representative in Western Sahara, Wolfgang Weisbrod-Weber, his successor, Kim Bolduc, and Major General Imam Edy Mulyono for their able and dedicated leadership of MINURSO. Finally, I also thank the men and women of MINURSO for their work to fulfil the Mission's mandate in difficult circumstances.

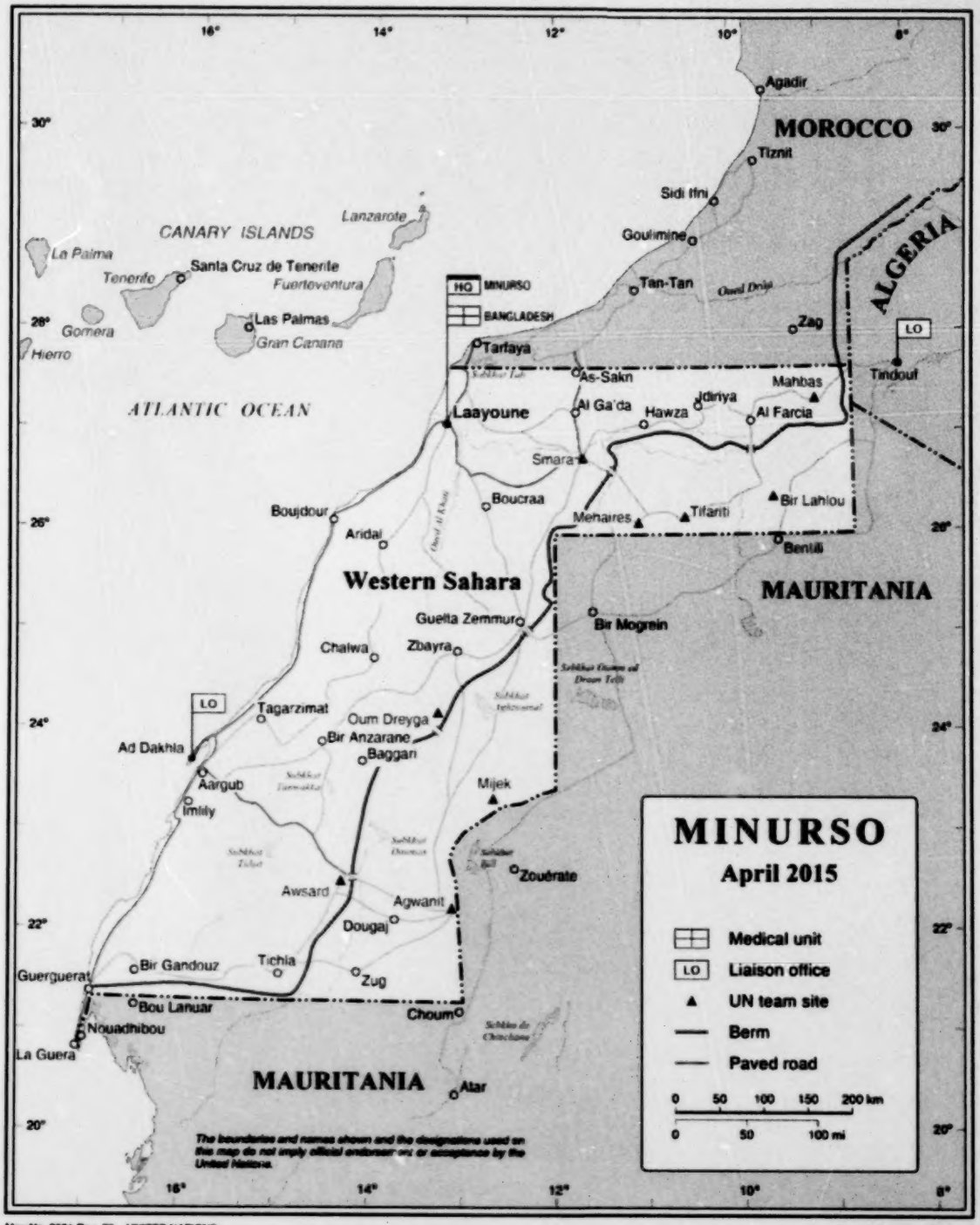
Annex

United Nations Mission for the Referendum in Western Sahara

Contributions as at 31 March 2015

Country	*Military observers*[a]	*Troops*[a]	*Civilian police*[b]	*Total*
Argentina	3	0	1	4
Austria	3	0	0	3
Bangladesh	6	20	0	26
Brazil	8	0	0	8
China	10	0	0	10
Croatia	7	0	0	7
Egypt	20	0	2	22
El Salvador	3	0	0	3
France	7	0	0	7
Germany	4	0	0	4
Ghana	5	7	0	12
Guinea	5	0	0	5
Honduras	12	0	0	12
Hungary	7	0	0	7
India	3	0	0	3
Indonesia	4	0	0	4
Ireland	3	0	0	3
Jordan	0	0	1	1
Kazakhstan	3	0	0	3
Malawi	3	0	0	3
Malaysia	10	0	0	10
Mongolia	4	0	0	4
Nepal	3	0	0	3
Nigeria	4	0	0	4
Pakistan	13	0	0	13
Paraguay	5	0	0	5
Poland	1	0	0	1
Republic of Korea	3	0	0	3
Russian Federation	7	0	0	7
Sri Lanka	1	0	0	1
Switzerland	2	0	0	2
Togo	1	0	0	1
Yemen	9	0	2	11
Total	**179**	**27**	**6**	**212**[c]

[a] Authorized military strength is 246, including the Force Commander.
[b] Authorized strength is 12.
[c] Actual strength on the ground, for military and civilian police, including the Force Commander.



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